

it will be a consolation that they are not entirely lost to us. Wise monitions, when they return on us with this melancholy charm, have more pathetic cogency than when they were first uttered by the voice of a living friend. It will be an interesting occupation of the pensive hour, to recount the advantages which we have received from the beings who have left the world, and to reinforce our virtues from the dust of those who first taught them.

In our review, we shall find that the companions of our childhood, and of each succeeding period, have had a great influence on our characters. A creature so prone to conformity as man, and at the same time so capable of being moulded into partial dissimilarity by social antipathies, cannot have conversed with his fellow beings thousands of hours, walked with them thousands of miles, undertaken with them numberless enterprises, smaller and greater, and had every passion, by turns, awakened in their company, without being immensely affected by all this association. A large share, indeed, of the social interest may have been of so common a kind, and with persons of so common an order, that the effect on the character has been too little peculiar to be perceptible during the progress. We were not sensible of it, till we came to some of those circumstances and changes in life, which make us aware of the state of our minds by the manner in which new objects are acceptable or repulsive to them. On removing into a new circle of society, for instance, we could perceive, by the number of things in which we found ourselves uncomplacent and uneonformable with the new acquaintance, the modification which our sentiments had received in the preceding social intercourse. But in some instances we have been in a short time sensible of a powerful force operating on our opinions, tastes, and habits, and reducing them to a greatly altered cast. This effect is inevitable, if a young susceptible mind happens to become familiarly acquainted with a person in whom a strongly individual character is sustained and dignified by uncommon mental resources; and it may be found that, generally, the greatest measure of effect has been produced by the influence of a very small number of persons; often of one only, whose master-spirit had more power to surround and assimilate a young ingenuous being, than the collective influence of a multitude of the persons, whose